

Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman for the time allotted. And what a wonderful bill, and I believe it is just going to really bring our whole Nation up.

Today, we face so many mounting global challenges--international security, reviving the global economy, health, environment, wars going on--and American leadership in response to these challenges depends on national policies such as the legislation that we are debating today.

The America COMPETES Act strengthens STEM education in order to prepare our future workforce to excel and to exceed in an international economy. Future generations' ability to address 21st century global matters efficiently and effectively will depend on their preparation and their responsiveness to international affairs.

Today, our schools lack some of the tools necessary to enhance United States' competitiveness, essential to our economy and, really, to our international success. And so I firmly believe that our Nation's leadership role in innovation depends on the education we provide in today's classrooms. In fact, one of my top legislative priorities is H.R. 3359, the U.S. and World Education Act, that has many of the types of things that this bill has.

To this end, the amendment that I am offering today would include the membership of elementary school and secondary school administrative associations to be part of the President's Advisory Committee on STEM Education. My amendment would add language to include the expertise of kindergarten through 12th grade school principals and administrators to the President's advisory committee created under section 302. The amendment will strengthen section 302 by ensuring the valuable contributions of those who are in our kindergarten through 12th grade system, those administering that, so they can bring back their ideas and tell us what is going on, because evidence suggests that kids lose interest in STEM in those grade levels. So I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.